

REMARKS

Information Disclosure Statement

This application is a continuation-in-part of a prior parent application, Serial No. 09/134,285. Applicant is providing copies of the references for the Examiner's convenience.

Specification

Applicant has amended the specification to address the Examiner's concerns regarding the use of the trademark Intel Pentium Processor ®.

Applicant has also amended the specification to correct typographical errors on pages 8 and 11.

No new matter has been added.

Claim Objections

Claim 18 is objected under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant has amended claim 18 to depend from claim 17, as intended, rather than claim 7, as claimed in the application. Applicant apologizes for this error.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claims 15, 30 and 49 recite the limitation "the classification" in line 2. Applicant has amended claims 15, 30 and 49 to recite "a classification."

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-8, 12, 18-21 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Jorasch et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,967,896). Applicant has amended claims 1-8 to claim an anonymous player account. Jorasch teaches away from an anonymous player account in that Jorasch states that the player database stores information on each player. Jorasch, col. 3, lines 57-58. Support for the anonymous player account is found in the Application, page 7 line 30 to page 8 line 12. Applicant has amended claim 12 to depend from claim 11 as intended, rather than claim 1, as claimed in the application. Applicant apologizes for the error. Applicant has

amended claims 18-21 and 23 to depend from claim 17, as intended, rather than claim 7. Again, Applicant apologizes for the error.

Claims 33, 40, 43-49 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by LeStrange et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,470,079). Applicant traverses this rejection. LeStrange does not anticipate creating player accounts accessible by the host computer. LeStrange says that machines are being built where magnetic card readers or smart card readers can accept credit from a player account **stored on casino credit cards** or a player's commercial credit card. Col. 1, lines 53-56. Thus, the account is stored on the card, not in memory accessible by the host computer. In addition, Applicant respectfully disagrees that Figures 4a and 4b show access to the account responsive to player-initiated command, as the Examiner stated in the Office Action. Figures 4a and 4b and their accompanying text fail to show player-initiated access. Moreover, LeStrange fails to provide for reading the credit meters a first time, storing the first meter reading, transferring credit between the account and the gaming device, reading the credit meters a second time and storing the second meter reading. LeStrange discloses updating meter values and recording events that cause the change. Col. 7, lines 2-4. In no way can this be read to support a first and second meter reading in association with transferring credit between the account and the gaming device.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jorasch et al. as discussed in connection with claim 1 above. Applicant has amended claim 9 and rewritten it in independent form.

With respect to claim 9, Jorasch fails to teach the invention. Jorasch does not disclose reading the credit meter on the gaming device before transferring credit, crediting the meter with the requested transfer and reading the credit meter on the gaming device after crediting the meter. Jorasch, as an invention directed to controlling a gaming device with a plurality of balances, does not and could not perform this function. *See Abstract*. Jorasch would have to reconcile pre and post transfer meter readings among a plurality of balances and would have to ensure that the correct balance was adjusted by the correct transfer amount. As such, Jorasch would not be able to perform this function.

Likewise, the Examiner is incorrect with respect to claim 10. The Examiner has stated that it is a standard accounting practice and would have been obvious to deduct the calculated difference from the account balance. First, Jorasch does not and cannot calculate the difference in the meter readings. Therefore, there would be no calculated difference to deduct. Second, it would be obvious to deduct the requested transfer amount from the account balance, and not the calculated difference. Using the Examiner's analogy, if a player were to request a transfer of \$10, the obvious thing to do would be to deduct \$10 from the player's account. It would not be obvious to calculate the difference in the meter readings before and after the transfer and use the calculated difference to deduct from the player's balance.

Claims 11, 13-15, 17, 22, 24-30 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jorasch et al. as discussed in connection with claims 10 and 12 above (as appropriate) in view of LeStrange et al. Applicant traverses this rejection. With respect to claim 17, the Examiner stated that although Jorasch does not disclose transferring a predetermined amount that LeStrange does. The Examiner cited LeStrange at col. 8, lines 9-13 for this proposition. However, that section reads: "In addition, gaming machine may include a special card reader for accepting promotional tickets or debit cards having a specified dollar amount available for gambling." [Reference numbers omitted]. This does not equate to transferring a predetermined credit from the account to the gaming device responsive to a transfer command initiated by the player at the gaming device. There is no suggestion in Applicant's invention that transferring the predetermined credit is limited to promotional tickets or debit cards with specified dollar amounts.

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jorasch et al. as applied to claim 1 in view of Walker et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,227,972). Applicant traverses this rejection. Walker's expiring account balance is in no way analogous to Applicant's locking the account when the measured time exceeds at least one established criterion. Walker's expiring card prevents a player from using the credits on the card after the card has expired in an effort to generate repeat business for the casino. *See Abstract*. Applicant's locking the account when the measured time exceeds at least one established criterion in no way suggests that the account cannot be unlocked, that the player loses credits, or that the player will not have access to the account in the future.

Claim 31 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jorasch et al. and LeStrange et al. as applied to claim 17 in view of Walker et al. Applicant traverses this rejection. Claim 31 is complementary to claim 16 and the same analysis is applicable.

Claims 34, 35 and 37 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LeStrange as discussed in connection with claims 33 and 36 above. Applicant traverses this rejection. These claims depend from independent claims which are themselves patentable.

Claims 38, 39, 41 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LeStrange as applied to claim 33 in view of Jorasch. Applicant traverses this rejection. These claims depend from independent claims which are themselves patentable.

Claim 31 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over LeStrange et al. as applied to claim 33 in view of Walker et al. Applicant traverses this rejection. Applicant does not understand the Examiner's rejection of this claim, specifically the relevance of claim 33 to claim 31. Claim 31 is, however, complementary to dependent claim 16 which has been previously discussed.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-35 and 37-61 of the application as amended is solicited. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at (503) 222-3613 if it appears that an interview would be helpful in advancing the case.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 4 and ending on page 3, line 12 with the following:

Ethernet hub 30 connects each of the bank controllers associated with banks 16, 18, 20 of EGMs to a concentrator 32. Another Ethernet hub 34 connects similar bank controllers (not shown), each associated with an additional bank of EGMs (also not shown), to concentrator 32. The concentrator functions as a data control switch to route data from each of the banks to a translator 36. The translator comprises a compatibility buffer between the concentrator and a proprietary accounting system 38. It functions to place all the data gathered from each of the bank controllers into a format compatible with accounting system 38. The present embodiment of the invention, translator 38 comprises [an Intel Pentium 200 MHz Processor operating Microsoft Windows NT 4.0.] a PENTIUM class microprocessor such as an Intel PENTIUM 200 MHz Processor operating Microsoft WINDOWS NT 4.0.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 16 and ending on page 3, line 17 with the following:

The configuration workstation 40 comprises a user interface. It comprises a personal computer including a keyboard, Intel [Pentium] PENTIUM Processor and Ethernet card.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 3, line 18 and ending on page 3, line 20 with the following:

The player server 42 comprises a microcomputer that is used to control messages that appear on displays associated with each EGM. Player server 42 includes an Intel [Pentium] PENTIUM Processor and an Ethernet card.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 24 and ending on page 8, line 27 with the following:

Consideration will [not] now be given to yet another embodiment of the invention. Turning again FIG. 2, this embodiment includes a keypad 80 and a vacuum fluorescent display

82, which in the present embodiment are associated with card reader 60. The keypad and display communicate with MCI 50 as described in the '961 patent.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 26 and ending on page 11, line 4 with the following:

After the player record is stored at MCI 50, the player uses keypad 80 to select cashless play. An algorithm that is part of the software stored in read only memory (ROM) (not shown) in MCI 50 then calculates an amount to transfer from the account in MCI 50 to credit meter 70 on EGM 12. The amount transferred is a predetermined amount calculated by the algorithm; it is not selected by the player using keypad 80. The algorithm checks flags associated with the account for minimum and maximum transfer limits that are imposed at one of terminals 90, 92 when the account is opened. These minimums and maximums are set regardless of the account balance. The algorithm, of course, also examines the account balance and does not permit a transfer in [access] excess of the account balance. The ability to set maximum limits regardless of account balance is a tool that can be used to address problem gamblers, among other things.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 28 and ending on page 12, line 2 with the following:

Once the unique transmission number is received by MCI 50, MCI 50 retrieves the balance on credit meter 70 and transmits it to CTS 86. This transmission and each network transmission that follows are associated with the unique transaction number. After MCI 50 receives a response from CTS 86 indicating successful transfer of the initial state of meter 70, the number of credits determined by the algorithm are [deducting] deducted from the account at MCI 50 and applied to credit meter 70. Next, the balance on credit meter 70 is again transmitted to CTS 86 and a response returned to MCI 50 to confirm that communication.

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Amended) A method for operating gaming devices interconnected by a network to a host computer comprising:

creating [a] an anonymous player account accessible by the host computer;

providing access to the account responsive to a first command initiated by a player at one of the gaming devices;

transferring credit from the account to the gaming device;

permitting gaming device play; and

cashing out from the gaming device responsive to a second command initiated by said player at said one gaming device.

2. (Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein creating [a] an anonymous player account accessible by the host computer comprises:

[issuing] providing a tracking card to the player;

storing [a] an anonymous player record on the host computer;

receiving an initial cash deposit from the player; and

crediting the deposit to the account.

3. (Amended) The method of claim 2 wherein said gaming devices are in a casino and wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer is performed at [a terminal connected to the network by an agent of the casino] an automated card dispenser.

9. (Amended) [The method of claim 1 wherein said method further comprises:]
A method for secure cashless transfer of credit between a player account communicating with a networked gaming device comprising:

receiving a request to transfer credit;

reading the credit meter on said one gaming device before transferring credit;

crediting the meter with the requested credit transfer;

reading the credit meter on said one gaming device after [transferring] crediting the meter;

calculating the difference in the meter readings; [and]

comparing the calculated difference with the amount [transferred] credited and;

permitting gaming device play.

10. (Amended) The method of claim 9 wherein said method further includes deducting the calculated difference from the account balance.

11. (Amended) The method of claim 10 wherein said method further comprises storing the amount [transferred] credited and the calculated difference at a location on the network remote from the player account.

12. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 11 wherein [transferring] a request to transfer credit from the account to the gaming device occurs responsive to a player-initiated command at said one gaming device.

13. (Amended) The method of claim 12 wherein the amount [transferred] credited is predetermined.

14. (Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein the amount [transferred] credited is a function of the balance in the player account.

15. (Amended) The method of claim 13 wherein the amount [transferred] credited is a function of [the] a classification of the player.

16. (Amended) The method of claim [1] 13 wherein said method further comprises:
measuring the time between each player account transaction; and
locking the account when the measured time exceeds at least one established criterion.

18. (Amended) The method of claim [7] 17 wherein said method further includes;
permitting gaming device play; and
cashing out from the gaming device responsive to a second command initiated by said player at said one gaming device.

19. (Amended) The method of claim [7] 17 wherein said method further includes; permitting gaming device play; and transferring all of the credit from the gaming device to the account responsive to a transfer command initiated by the player at said one gaming device.

20. (Amended) The method of claim [7] 17 wherein creating a player account accessible by the host computer comprises:

- issuing a tracking card to the player;
- storing a player record on the host computer;
- receiving an initial cash deposit from the player; and
- crediting the deposit to the account.

27. (Amended) The method of claim 26 wherein said method further includes deducting the calculated difference from the account balance.

30. (Amended) The method of claim 17 wherein the amount of said predetermined credit transferred is a function of [the] a classification of the player.

33. (Amended) A method for operating gaming devices interconnected by a network to a host computer comprising:

- creating a player account accessible by the host computer;
- providing access to the account responsive to a command initiated by a player at one of the gaming devices;
- reading the [game] credit meter[s] a first time;
- storing the first meter reading;
- transferring credit between the account and the gaming device;
- reading the [game] credit meter[s] a second time; and
- storing the second meter reading.

34. (Amended) The method of claim 33 wherein said method further includes:
adjusting the account by the amount of [money] credit transferred between the account
and the gaming device; and
storing the account balance.

37. (Amended) The method of claim 36 wherein said method further includes:
adjusting the account by the amount of [money] credit transferred between the account
and the gaming device; and

49. (Amended) The method of claim 47 wherein the amount transferred is a
function of [the] a classification of the player.